

ECMA welcomes Scottish decision on electronic training collars for dogs

Press release

Date: November 2008.

The Electronic Collar Manufacturers Association (ECMA) has welcomed the decision by the Scottish Parliament to wait before making a decision on any policy changes regarding electronic training collars.

In a move deemed “common sense” by ECMA, it announced that it will wait for the publication of Defra research into the welfare implications of these products is published in 2010 or 2011, before any decisions are made.

Electronic training devices have been widely used for many years to improve an owner’s ability to train their animals and thus improve relationships between the owner and the pet. From a survey of training collar owners, 95% reported that the problem for which they bought the collar was completely solved with no ill effect on the dog. With an estimated 350,000 collars in use in the UK, as many as 332,500 pet owners know their pet is safer and has more freedom, and that they, the pet owner, have peace of mind.

The Defra study involves looking at hard scientific fact and research into the welfare of animals trained by the collars. The UK Government recently stated of the study:

“While we are aware of a number of scientific studies on electric shock collars, Defra considers that to date those studies published in this area are not sufficiently robust and that the evidence base needs to be built on before consideration can be given to either banning or regulating their use. The government is not prepared to do this unless there is clear evidence that these devices in themselves are harmful to welfare”.

As many as 350,000 highly responsible owners are alarmed that the well being of their pets and the peace of mind they have had while using electronic training collars could be compromised, putting their pets at risk of road traffic accidents and shooting by farmers for worrying sheep.

Duncan McNair, spokesman for ECMA said:

“ECMA are delighted that common sense has prevailed in this decision by the Scottish Parliament.

“The unscientific, emotional, tabloid campaign against the products has had the effect of diverting attention from other issues which certain organisations would rather were swept under the carpet.

“It is now time for a bona fide scientific approach to evaluating the products, an approach based on reason, not emotion.”

ECMA believe that any sensible evaluation of these products must look at the results achieved by the overwhelming majority of the pet owners who use the products and must assess the cost and benefit to animal welfare in light of the greater good. 100,000 dogs are killed on the roads every year in the United Kingdom (RSPCA figures). With 6,000,000 dogs in total, 1 in 60 of the UK's dog population is killed on the roads every year. The chances of this happening to a dog whose owner is using an electronic containment fence or remote training product are virtually zero. **Training collars save lives.**

Ends.

Contact: Duncan McNair, ECMA Spokesperson on 07941 082694